

The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, December 1. 1694.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT Cheese toasted over a Candle ordinarily burning, becomes Black? but if the Flame be centered, by holding the Finger and Thumb round it, no such Sooty matter will stick upon the cheese?

Ans'w. The circumferencing the Basis, or Body of the Flame, with the Finger and Thumb, causes the Flame to ascend readily, by keeping off the Air or Breath; But the blackning of the Cheese depends not upon it; For the Flame ascending in a Pyramidal shape, the Cuspe, or highest point of the Flame, will toast or scorch Cheese held at a distance, the smoak dispersing it self from under the Cheese: But if the Cheese, or other Substance, be held so near, that it depresses or flattens the Cuspe of the Flame, the Form of the ascending smoak is altered thereby, and compell'd to rise up against the Cheese in a Circle, and proportionable unto that depression of the Cuspe, the Soot sticks more or less, and blackens the Cheese, or whatever substance presses upon the Cuspe.

Quest. 2. *Why Rivers are not Salt, as well as the Sea?*

Ans'w. A School-boy can tell ye; 'tis because of their percolation through the Earth, supposing that *Fontes ortuuntur a Mari*; which some appear not to do, but because they never flow but upon great Rains, gluts of melted Snow, or the like.

Quest. 3. *I've been often told there are seven senses, but know but five; pray tell me which are the two other?*

Ans'w. If you had any sense your self, you'd not ask such a senseless question; and it may be we shan't be thought to have much more for answering it, being, we suppose, dated from the same place with that which follows.

Quest. 4. *Whether your Stock of Sagacity is exhausted, or you grow wanton, and luxurious, by your profits? If not, pray what's the matter wi' ye? For I'm sure our Sex once took ye for their Champions, whereas now you leave us here, and take no manner of care of us?* Bedlam, Octob.

16. 1694.

Ans'w. Alas, poor Lady! We ne're pretended to that heigh of *Knight-Errantry* as to *Storm Enchanted Castles* for the sake of your fair Sex neither. However, as soon as e're we have dispatch't all the business that lies before us, and Answer'd all the Questions that are or shall be Propos'd, we promise to trip over to your new Airy Apartment, and if we can't relieve your misfortunes, at least share 'em with you.

Quest. 5. *What is the best, most easy, and most improvable Part of Philosophy for a young Student, who has not any great Elizie, to Prosecute Experimentally, as the Famous Mr. Boyle did, so as to make it, at once, his Study and Diversions?*

Ans'w. That's much as his Genius is, for according to that, one part of Experimental Philosophy may be more improvable to him than another. *Chymistry*, doubtless, is a very Noble, and sufficiently useful Study; but this, we doubt, will scarce agree with his small Estate; and besides it can't be learn't without a Guide; and if he meets with a Cheat, he is ruin'd, as thousands have been before him. *Astronomy* is a bewitching study, and a man may, we believe, arrive at good proficiency in it at an easie charge, with good Glasses, and the advantage of the New Observations. But here, unless his Glasses be exquisite, 'tis probable he must pore a long while in 'em before he discovers any thing

New in the Cœlestia Bodies, and consequently can't much improve that Science. There seems to be a fairer Field open'd in *Micrography*, by the Microscopical Glasses, which may be had with no great charge, and always present us with a New Face of things, discovering unknown Worlds all about us, and consequently must give a surprising pleasure to the curious and industrious Enquirer, and be as useful as pleasant, by disclosing still New Instances of the Power and Wisdom of the Creator; and he who should carefully read the Observations of *Swammerdam Levenboeck*, Mr. *Isaac*, and others, which are made to his hand, and confirm and advance them by New Experiments of his own, so as to Range those little creatures into a systematical Order (as has been attempted in Plants, and a large and happy progress already made in it, though far from being compleated). Such a person we are apt to believe might Rationally promise himself, he should thereby procure great improvements to the common service of Divinity and Philosophy, and consequently a fair Esteem and Reputation for himself with all the Learned World.

Quest. 6. *Can such a thing be in Nature, as that a man of Fourscore Years of Age should be able to get a child? One who has liv'd at an extraordinary Rate; and though his Humour and Inclinations are gay enough, yet is so far from Hail, of that Age, that he's extremely Gouty and Infirm. Whether it be a breach of Charity to doubt the Virtue of his Wife, though Prudence and Respect may oblige one to silence?*

Ans'w. Instances of that Nature there have been in both sexes, though more among Old Men, that of Old *Par* being sufficiently famous, among several others; And what has been may be, if the Age were all the difficulty; Nay, even notwithstanding his *Goutiness*. Though we confess this is not a World to be over-kind in straining their belief that way, to secure either the Gentleman's or Ladies Reputation. However, 'tis best, we think, to err of the charitable side, unless we have evident presumption to the contrary, from the Temper and Conversation of the Party concerned in the Question.

Quest. 7. *Whether it's lawful for a woman to marry one she don't love, in hopes that Love will come after?*

Ans'w. There's a great deal of difference between not loving a person, and not being able to love him, as having an unconquerable aversion to him, either from some secret unaccountable causes, (as who can give a satisfactory Reason why so many people have an Antipathy to Cheese, unless that they were surfeited of milk before they were weaned) or else such an Aversion be grounded on some disagreeableness in a man's Person or Humour, which may be very difficult to conquer. In both those cases 'tis not prudent, nor, we think, lawful, to marry, because one main end of Matrimony, mutual comfort and support, can never be answered. Besides, you'll find so much to bear with, and forgive in your Husband, (as well as he in you) that unless you are both Angels, that without this *Love on both sides*, to sweeten and foder all, you are like to lead but a miserable Life. But to tell Truth, men are seldom so complaisant after marriage as before, and ten to one you must do all your self towards loving 'em, since they generally think they have said all their part before Matrimony.

Quest. 8. *Whether is Anger a Necessary Passion?*

Ans'w. Why not? as well as Love, Fear, and all the rest? Else why would God have implanted them in

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the minds of men? and why, was our Saviour himself, who knew no sin, capable not only of *Love and Delight*, but also of *Sorrow and Anger*?

Quest. 9. *What course ought a person to take, who finds their Eyes and Mind inclined to wander, in the place of publick Worship; but is so extremely concerned at it, that they resolve, unless you direct otherwise, if not intirely to leave off the publick Devotion, at least to be much less frequent at them?*

Answ. If all our Querists would but oblige themselves to follow our Directions, 'twould be to some purpose to let 'em have 'em. However, we can but give them our Judgment, and the Reasons on which we ground it; and if they won't follow it, when we are in the Right, the Fault is theirs, as well as the inconvenience.

To the present case, we answer: The Querist does very ill, once to think, of either partly or totally forsaking the Publick Worship, by Reason of the Temptations they find there attending them; because at this Rate, they must forsake the *World* too, for the same Reason. Nay, nor though they find they are generally too weak for the Temptation, because *forsaking the Assembly of the Saints*, is doubtless a sin, and one sin, we are sure, cannot excuse another. But there are other ways besides this, to conquer the Temptation; as before they come to Church, *earnest Prayer*; the same as soon as entered. The consideration of the Place, and Busyness, and invisible Attendants. Besides this, fixing their Eyes constantly on their *Psalms, Prayers, and other Offices*, and sitting, if possible, low and out of sight. After all, this is certain, that he whose *Heart* is full of true Devotion, will have no Room either in that, or his Eyes, for any other Object.

Quest. 10. *I have been a Tradesman these many years, and the World has for several years smiled upon me, and I have been in a prosperous condition; but now 'tis otherwise, and by the going off of a great many men in my debt, I find I am run behind-hand; and that on the looking over my books, and casting up my Stock, all my good Debts and those will but just pay my Debts: Whereas, should I pay all as they fall, I should have nothing left to subsist on, and to maintain my Family. I desire your Judgment, whether 'tis lawful for me to compound with them, and pay as far as I am able, reserving some little matters to my self to begin the World again with?*

Answ. 'Tis an hard peice of Equity, to pay all away, and leave ones own Family: However, we are inclin'd to think, if your Creditors absolutely demanded their full due, 'tis not just to retain it from them, as far as your Estate will extend, because 'tis properly theirs, and not yours. But maynt there be a Mean found in the *Green Cafe*? And that is, to acquaint your Creditors with your condition (keeping your Body out of the way, since we can scarce think our Forefathers were very wise, or kind, to order it should lie Rotting in a Goal, perhaps not for your own, but others ill-husbandry); and if they have any manner of Christian, or Humane Compassion in them, they'll Voluntarily allow an honest man something to subsist on: Though, if ever you should come to better circumstances, you are, we think, oblig'd to pay them all the rest of the Debt, though it should happen to be twice as much as you compounded for.

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